

### **Letter from Executive Board**

It is an honor to moderate the NATO at AMIMUN'19. This letter shall also serve as a concept note for the committee and our expectations from the committee is to function. MUN's as a concept are designed to be a simulation more than a conference. This difference is inherent and more obvious in each country's representation through their delegation. The head of this delegation is usually a diplomat who is firstly representing the government and its goals and is hence tasked with the responsibility of indulging other countries into their own goals and using diplomacy effectively into use to achieve the aforementioned goals. The end of the simulation then is different for each diplomat and it is the means to that end that shall define the quality of the simulation.

Apart from the simulation part, it is important to remember the inherent limitations of every student in terms of using or applying international law or such. This then implies that it is not necessary to indulge in highly technical discussions that ensure no learning to the delegate, it is rather imperative that all discussions be integrated with logic that has been graciously been gifted to mankind through our collective wisdom. It is thus expected that this concept note also serves as a very important start point to the simulation and the delegates are able to infer a lot more than what is shown as face value.

The agenda has multiple facets and can take a national or international viewpoint. For the benefit of the delegates and the quality of the simulation, the background guide shall give small introductions and an important start-point to your research. It is important to remember although this has been emphasized all throughout your MUN careers, this is only a start point and this is just a quick start to your research while the end awaits you all.

Godspeed

**All the Best Everyone!**

## About the Committee

NATO is a military alliance between Europe and the United States. Meant as a defensive alliance, it has taken an increasingly active role in the world in the past decade. Since its inception in 1948, NATO has expanded from its 12 charter members in North America and Western Europe to 26 members encompassing most of Europe. Originally formed to combat the growing Soviet influence in Europe, NATO underwent a crisis of identity with the end of the Cold War in 1991.

NATO found a new purpose when it took on an increasingly proactive role in Europe during 1990's, arguing that instability anywhere in Europe is a threat to Atlantic security. The first such mission was the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995). NATO initially adopted the role of protecting UN safe areas from Serbian militias. However, by 1994, NATO forces were actively bombing militia positions and eventually, leading NATO members and Russia coordinated peace talks between the Serbian, Croat, and Muslim militias. As part of the Dayton Accords which ended the conflict, NATO led the international Stabilization force, which monitored conditions in Bosnia until 2004, when it was replaced by a European Union-led force.

NATO expanded its scope once again in 1999 when it intervened militarily to halt atrocities perpetrated by the Serbian military in Kosovo. The 11 week campaign was the first time that NATO had undertaken military action without a UN mandate. The organization had successfully stopped ethnic cleansing and secured a volatile part of Europe, but had also, for the first time, committed aggressive acts against an internationally recognized government without the sanction of the United Nations. Since September 11th, NATO's role has been expanded further to combating instability anywhere in the globe.

## **History and Current Events**

Historically, military service has been a male occupation, but there are many examples of female participation in war. In 1200 B.C., Lady Fu Hao became China's first female strategist and led women into battle. Also, in 1200 B.C., an Israeli woman named Deborah led a military campaign in Qadesh. History also tells the stories of Amazons, Joan of Arc, Cleopatra VII of Egypt, Gwenllian Verch Gruffydd of Wales and Emilia Plater of Poland. During the American Revolutionary War, women posed as men in order to participate. The role of women in military service tends to expand in times of war to cover a wide variety of duties. For example, women's involvement in the war effort greatly increased during the World Wars. Yet women primarily served as nurses, cleaners, and cooks.

When the UN Charter was signed in 1945, just four of the 160 signatories were women. Moreover, only 25 of the original 51-member states gave women the same voting rights as men. Nevertheless, when the General Assembly (GA) began to meet, women played an important role in its deliberations. Their presence was especially felt in the formation of organizations and treaties to articulate and advance the rights of women.

From the beginning, women's rights were discussed in the context of both peace and war. For example, during the inaugural session of the GA, former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt (who was one of the US delegates to the GA) invited the 17 women delegates and advisors to a meeting. At the meeting, they drafted an "open letter addressed to the women of the world." Roosevelt read the letter to the GA in February 1946. The letter argued that "this new chance for peace was won through the joint efforts of men and women working for the common ideals of human freedom." The female delegates called on "the Governments of the world to encourage women everywhere to take a more active part in national and international affairs, and on women who are conscious of their opportunities to come forward and share in the work of peace and reconstruction as they did in war and resistance."

Over the years, the GA has drafted a number of treaties and declarations related to women. In fact, the female delegates to the first session of the GA were instrumental in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which asserts that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," that every person has the right to "life, liberty, and security of person," and that no person "should be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." In addition, the UDHR states that all persons "have

Equal right of access to public service in his country.” Under the UDHR, these rights apply at all times and in all places.

## **Women’s Rights in War**

In the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, states clarified the rights of persons during war. In the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, states agreed to follow procedures to reduce the likelihood of rape of female prisoners by providing separate facilities for male and female prisoners and by using female guards for female prisoners. States also agreed to transfer female prisoners of war who are pregnant or mothers of small children to neutral countries. Similarly, the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War established the category of “protected persons” to distinguish non-combatants (civilians) from soldiers and gave protected persons certain rights. Article 27 applies to women in particular. It states, “Women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honor, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault.” According to Article 38, pregnant women and mothers of children under 7 years cannot be targeted by military forces, regardless of their nationality or location. Moreover, female refugees and detainees have the same rights as female prisoners of war.

Although the Geneva Conventions laid the legal basis for prosecuting rape as a war crime, until the 1990s, there were no efforts to do so. Only after the civil wars in Rwanda and Yugoslavia, which involved mass rapes, did international criminal tribunals begin to hear and rule on cases of sexual violence.

In 1998, the rights of women during war were further articulated in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which clarifies the meaning of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes and provides for enforcement against individuals who perpetrate them. In 2002, these crimes became illegal and subject to prosecution by the ICC in states that had ratified the Statute. As of March 2016, 124 countries had ratified the Rome Statute. According to the ICC, depending on the reason rape and other forms of sexual violence occur in conflict situations, they can be war crimes, crimes against humanity, or part of a campaign of genocide.

The third of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by UN Member States in 2000 was “to promote gender equality and empower women.” The fifth of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, is to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” Reducing violence against women, both in the family and in society, has been (and continues to be) an important aspect of achieving these goals. In a 2005 report on progress toward MDG #3, the UN Millennium Project Task Force on Gender Equality noted the following about sexual violence during war:

*An International Rescue Committee study suggests that sexual violence has been a strategy of armed conflict in virtually all recent armed conflicts... While wartime rape may be an end in itself, it can also be used as a means of subverting community bonds, both as “war booty” and “asset stripping” as in Mozambique... or as a tool of ethnic cleansing as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ... Rwanda ... and Sudan... In post conflict contexts women are also extremely vulnerable to rape in refugee camps. One study found that 26 percent of Burundi women in a Tanzanian camp had experienced sexual violence since becoming a refugee... In the Rwandan camps in 1994 it was reported that virtually every woman and girl past puberty had been sexually assaulted*

Violence against women has many costs. When women and girls suffer illness, death, depression, and social isolation, countries face health care problems such as drug abuse and the spread of HIV-AIDs, as well as economic problems such as absenteeism and reduced productivity.

To reduce sexual violence against women, states can use international treaties such as the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute to hold violators accountable in national courts and at the ICC. Over time, this may deter possible offenders from carrying out sexual violence.

In addition, health care providers, schools, and refugee camps can provide counseling and other services to help victims of sexual violence recover and lead healthy lives. Because violence against women often continues when war is over, it is necessary to educate all members of society about women’s rights and the high costs individuals and societies bear when they are violated. As New York Times columnist Nicholas D. Kristof explains,

*“The evidence is overwhelming that the best way to deal with rape is to demystify it, dismantle the taboos, and address it directly.”*

In 1979, the GA adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This treaty came into force in 1981, when 20 states had ratified it. States that are party to CEDAW promise to:

*Take all appropriate measures... to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men  
And women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and  
customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the  
inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for  
men and women*

In addition, states pledge to report every four years on the measures they have taken to improve women's rights. These reports are reviewed by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In the reporting guidelines, CEDAW specifically request information on violence against women and women and armed conflict.

In 2000, the GA negotiated an optional protocol (additional agreement) to CEDAW. States that ratify this protocol agree to allow individuals and groups to submit complaints against them to CEDAW and allow CEDAW to investigate reports of rights violations within their borders. As of 2016, there are 99 signatories and 187 state parties to CEDAW. The United States is the only signatory that has not yet ratified the convention, and just five states have neither acceded to nor become a signatory (Tonga, Sudan, Iran, Nauru, and Somalia).

On 19 June 2015, the GA proclaimed June 19th of each year to be the International Day for Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict (A/RES/69/293). This international recognition is to raise awareness of the need to end conflict-related sexual violence, honor victims and survivors of sexual violence, and to pay tribute to those who have devoted their lives to and lost their lives in standing up for the eradication of these crimes.

## **Women's Rights to Participate in Public Policy, Including Military and Peacekeeping Operations**

States that ratify CEDAW also promise to "take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country" including "the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof ... at all levels of government" (Article 7). These states also agree "to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations" (Article 8).

Despite this treaty, as of September, 2016, just 22.8% of national legislators were women. Moreover, as of August 2015, just 11 of the 192 UN member states had female heads of state, and 10 had female head of government. Globally, there are 37 states in which women account for less than 20 percent of parliamentarians in lower houses, including 6 parliaments with no women at all.

Occupational segregation by sex also continues at the UN. According to a UN report from March 2016, there were just 37 female ambassadors to the UN, comprising just 19% of the 193 Member States total. The number of women in the Security Council has fallen from its peak of six women in 2014 to four in 2015 to just one in 2016. Further, there has been no woman Secretary-General and only two woman presidents of the GA over 70 years. Thus, the UN workers responsible for implementing policies to reduce conflict and mitigate its effects on women are overwhelmingly men.

National military forces are also predominantly male. The average of women in the armed forces of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members was just 10.3% in 2014.<sup>31</sup> This average has increased by 3.2% since 1999 when women represented 7.15% of the armed forces of NATO members. Latvia had the largest percentage of women serving in its military (16.5%), followed by the United States (15.2%), Bulgaria (14.8%), Hungary (14.6%) and Canada (14.3%). Israel (which is not a NATO member) is the only country in which military service is compulsory for both men and women. Even there, men are required to serve two years, while women are required to serve just one. Although 92% of positions in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) are available to women, women make up just 33 percent of the Israeli armed forces.

Even when military service is open to women, they are generally excluded from combat positions. What counts as combat varies by country. In recent years, American women have served as tank gunners and in other battlefield roles in Iraq and Afghanistan. Until December 2015, the US Army had excluded women from units “assigned a routine mission to engage in direct combat, or which collocate routinely with units assigned to a direct combat mission.” In a historic announcement in December 2015, US Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that the Pentagon would open all combat jobs to women—enabling them to do things like drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat. This policy change also enables women to serve as Army Rangers, Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers, and everything else that was previously only open to men.



The situation is much the same in UN peacekeeping forces. Peacekeeping forces are military and police forces authorized by the Security Council or General Assembly to provide security in countries emerging from armed conflict. As of June 2016, 101,280 peacekeepers were serving in 16 peace operations on four continents. These forces were contributed by 123 UN Member States. According to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), only 4.2% of all peacekeeping forces were women in the missions completed in June 2016.

According to Rachel Mayanja, former UN Assistant Secretary General and current Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, it is imperative to increase the number of female peacekeepers. Female peacekeepers provide good role models for young women and are often the only peacekeepers women will trust when they have been victims of sexual violence. According to DPKO:

*Women are better-placed to carry out a number of crucial peacekeeping tasks, including interviewing victims of sexual and gender-based violence, working in women's prisons, assisting female ex-combatants during the process of demobilizing and reintegration into civilian life and mentoring female cadets at police academies.*

The finding that male peacekeepers are more “reflective and responsible” when they serve with women is important. The presence of UN peacekeepers in a country has been associated with an increase in rape and prostitution.

Increasing the percentage of women in peacekeeping missions has been difficult because peacekeeping forces are loaned to the UN by Member States. Therefore, the percentage of women in UN peacekeeping forces depends on military, cultural, and social factors at the national level. According to sociologist Mady Wechler Segal, among the military factors are a country's security situation, its level of military technology, the structure of its military forces, and its recruitment policies. Social factors include the state of a country's economy, the rate of female participation in the labor force, and the structure of the family. Finally, cultural factors include national ideas about gender roles and gender equality.

Ideas about the ability of women to serve in military roles can change over time with the influence of new norms or even advancements in military technology. When it was demonstrated that US Air Force cockpits could be inexpensively redesigned to accommodate women and that this would benefit short men as well as women and increase foreign sales, the changes were quickly accepted. Similarly, although US military commanders have long voiced concern about the effects of women on unit cohesion, women have served in large



Numbers in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with little or no detrimental effect on unit performance.

Some revolutionary groups actively recruit women for combat missions. In the 1980s, thousands of women joined the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). These women defied the patriarchal traditions of El Salvador and left their homes and families to become members of a militant insurgency. Similarly, women made up 30 percent of the guerilla armies in Nicaragua and Peru that fought against highly trained, all-male government forces. According to sociologist Jocelyn S. Viterna, the Salvadoran women who participated in guerrilla combat fell into three groups. First were the “politicized guerrillas” who believed in the cause of the FMLN and wanted to become involved at all levels. Second were the “reluctant guerrillas,” women who fought because the conflict left them no other option. Finally, there were “recruited guerillas,” women who lived in refugee camps or repopulated areas and were recruited because they sought adventure or revenge.

Women also participate in terrorist attacks. In January 2002, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, said Hamas would never use a female for suicide missions. Yet on January 14, 2004, Hamas deployed its first female suicide bomber. When questioned about the reversal, Yassin said it signified a “significant evolution in our fight. The male fighter’s face many obstacles... Women are like a reserve army—when there is a necessity, we use them.” Female suicide bombers provide a tactical advantage in countries where women are veiled. Also female attacks gain more publicity, which helps recruit new members.

Many states are trying to improve gender equality in the military. In Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs has been working with the Ministry of Defense to admit equal percentages of men and women to military schools. Similarly, Jordan has implemented a 10-year strategy to enhance the role of women in the military. In France, national legislation provides equal opportunities for service in the armed forces and training.

# Women in arm conflict

## Introduction

*"Protecting and empowering women during and after conflicts is one of the most important challenges of our time"*

As the part of civilians into war and armed conflicts has been growing relentlessly since the 80's to reach nowadays 90% of the total war casualties, women and girls inside conflicted areas tend to be more and more exposed to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). In addition to the ordeals of war like the destruction of civilian infrastructures, the forced displacement or the violation of fundamental rights, militias and armed groups such as terrorists organizations often see women as tools of warfare, commodities to be used regardless of the physical and psychological consequences of such methods and abuses including mass rape, forced abortions to process "ethnical cleaning" or on the opposite forced marriages associated with forced pregnancies to engender child soldiers, prostitution, genital mutilation (FGM) or even sexual slavery.

Not only those mistreatments harm the condition of women, leaving them traumatized with corporal and moral scars and marked with the seal of violence, but they furthermore hamper the "social health" of the country, i.e. the social bonds within the civil society as women isolate themselves or are isolated by their families and communities, as well as the peace and reconstruction process following the resolution of the conflict, opening the way for another fall into arms.

The aim of the UN Women on this hot-button issue will be, in addition to the precedent resolutions of the UN regarding this topic, to think up and agree to new solutions in order to prevent the scourge of gender-based and sexual violence in armed conflicts and reduce the price of their consequences for the affected women and girls.

## Goals

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women gathering the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, India, Iraq, New-Zealand, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Bosnia Herzegovina, the Russian Federation, Guatemala, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America will have the great task to design new regulations in order to prevent the violence on women in armed conflicts and therefore implement and complete the objectives of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.

Although SGBV exists since the beginning of war itself, we can clearly see nowadays a resurgence of those violent practices. Perhaps one of the most prominent example is the kidnapping of 200 Nigerian schoolgirls in Chibok on the night of 14-15 April 2014 by the rebel group Boko Haram. But women and girls pay a heavy tribute during a conflict, and the great modern showdowns of our time were devastating for them, like in 1994 during the Rwandan genocide where an estimated 250,000 to 500,000 women were raped<sup>4</sup> or during the Yugoslavian war where up to 50,000 women were raped in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The SGBV is still prominent today in armed or civil conflicts and is largely used by armed factions or terrorist groups as a military tactic in order to achieve a satisfaction of domination over the opponent, a racist or eugenic purpose or even help the financing with sexual slavery or forced prostitution.

The terrorist organisation of the Islamic State is known for instance to have implemented inside controlled territories in both Iraq and Syria an important and well-organised sex-slavery trade of 3,500 persons, including thousands of women from the Yazidi religious minority of Iraq.

It is clearly difficult to assess precisely the number of mistreatments and to identify the aggressors. Notwithstanding, the most recent Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict (SVAC) dataset covering sexual violence during 129 conflicts active between 1989 and 2009 and the post-conflict periods immediately thereafter achieved to draft a dataset, in which they identified 42% of the perpetrators of sexual violence in conflicts to be state-actors, whereas militias and rebel groups were held accountable for only 24% and 17% of the acts of SGBV. However, those results are to be used cautiously, as many perpetrators disguise themselves to pursue their mischiefs.

### **Main Strategic Issues**

The gender-based violence within armed conflicts has a lot of effects, not only on the victims of these treatments themselves, but also on the general state and the possibilities of the social and economic recovery of the concerned area. The traumatism of women in regions that have already endured warfare thwarts the perspective of a general recovery and development in key domains. Therefore, SGBV in conflicts often exacerbates many inequalities that last after a war ends.

### **Issues on Reproductive Health**

The mistreatments of women during armed conflicts surely damage at first the maternal health, as well as the perspective of a demographical recovery, especially when they suffered from sexual violence for a long period of time. The gender-based violence enables a higher mortality rate that generally lasts after the conflict. The database provided by the UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group shows in fact that in 2013, countries in a conflict or post-conflict situation to have a maternal mortality rate of 531 deaths per 100,000 live births, compared to a global rate of 210.

Conflicts and sexual violence have moreover a lasting harmful influence on the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of women, for example in Rwanda, where sexual violence was widespread during the genocide, leading to a cohort of children conceived through rape (Nowrojee 1996) but also leading, according to Schindler and Brück to a collapse of the TFR from 8.5 children per woman in 1983 to 5.8 in 2000, six years after the massacre. This study shows us furthermore that it took 11 years for the FTR to regain its growth.

### **Mass Displacement of Women and Children**

Europe is experiencing nowadays for the first time since World War II a massive stream of refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea to flee armed conflicts, persecutions and pervasive sexual and gender-based violence. The Initial Assessment Report of the UNHCR regarding the protection risks and responses for Women and Girls in the European Refugee and Migrant Crisis states that 950,469 refugees have arrived through the Mediterranean from January to November 2015, including 24 percent of children and 16 percent of women, of whom a significant part is pregnant, carrying new born babies or in a lactating stage.

As women and girls are forced to flee a region where excessive violence and sexual aggressions take place, it is our duty to reflect on ways of protecting them from further gender-based violence on the way to asylum. The UNHCR report thus shows that the primary fear of Farah (case study female refugee from Afghanistan) and of the majority of the questioned panel was of men along the refugee

And migration route. Negligence and opacity on this topic would certainly increase the negative effects of SGBV on the health and further integration of women and girls migrants.

### **Education and Health Concerns**

Conflicts tend to aggravate the conditions and accesses to education for little girls, and widen the inequalities between men and women further in the job market. Conflict and post-conflict countries show an adjusted net enrolment ratio of 76% for girls in primary schools, as the global rate reaches 91% of the girls. Terrorists organisations like IS or Boko Haram in Nigeria forbid women and girls to go to school or get an education other than a religious one.

Another appalling consequence of SGBV in conflicted areas is the risk of an increase in the spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections due to the lack of quality reproductive health services, and the conditions in which those mistreatments take place (lack of protection, physical and psychological vulnerability, higher risks of infection due to the lack of hygiene). Various studies, conducted in the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa in 2012 by the UNAIDS, in 2011 by the WHO and in 2011 by the MGLSD highlight the link between HIV and sexual violence. For instance, over 60% of the HIV-infected persons in the Sub-Saharan region are women, who often had a coerced first relation leading to an infection. In spite of their horrifying condition and the symptoms they are suffering from, most of them renounce to get the antiretroviral therapy because of the physical retaliations they may get from their companions in case of disclosure.

### **Prevention of Conflicts and Terrorism**

*“Women are the best drivers of growth, the best hope for reconciliation in conflict and the best buffer against the radicalisation of youth and the repetition of cycles of violence”*

As UN Women Executive Director Mlambo-Ngcuka stated in her contribution to the journal Foreign Policy on February 10, 2015, extremists “place the subordination of woman at the forefront of their agenda”. She claims that the best way to fight obscurantism, especially from radicalised women and girls, is to empower women at the “foundations of resilient and stable communities”.

Mlambo-Ngcuka affirms that the counter-terrorism militarised forces generally cripple the economic and social activity, destroying civilian infrastructures and encouraging displacement, where women and girls are more vulnerable to sexual violence. Therefore, gender equality and woman empowerment, just like protection during conflicts, help the durability of the post-conflict reconstruction, especially, according to Nigerian sociologist Zeinabou Hadari, because “every step forward for women’s right is a piece of the struggle against fundamentalism”.

## **THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

### **The 4th World Conference, The Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action**

The UN have started to raise awareness on the topic of women’s right and equality of gender in 1975 with the first World Conference for the International Women’s Year in Mexico, where was created the International Women’s Right Day on March 8th, followed by three more conferences in Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995). The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing was a turning point in terms of defence of women’s rights. In September 1995, the representatives of 189 countries have gathered in Beijing to sign an official declaration to promote the struggle for gender equality, the development and peace. That declaration describes concrete steps to follow in a Platform of Action to steer national and international politics toward a better treatment of women.

The Platform of Action draws up a list of strategic objectives and actions for the states to carry out concerning certain aspects of gender inequality like women and poverty, the education and training of women, gender based violence or women in power and decision making. Regarding the issue of women in armed conflicts, the Beijing Platform of Action lists 6 objectives for the delegates to consider and take action as they seek to legislate:

- Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation
- Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments
- Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human right abuse in conflict situations
- Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace
- Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women
- Provide assistance to the women of the colonies and non-self-governing territories

## **The Security Council Resolutions on Women in Armed Conflicts**

Since the 1995 Platform of Action, the UN Security Council has voted on several resolutions to overcome the challenges of SGBV and the overrepresentation of women in the casualties of armed conflicts. The delegates of this year's edition must therefore acknowledge the existing piece of international legislation on this issue.

### **Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women and Peace and Security**

The Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council is often considered as a landmark of the existing legislation on women in armed conflicts. The resolution enables a recognition of gender aspects into the Security Council interventions and aims to prop up the place of women "at all decisionmaking levels in national, regional and international institutions". It is one of the very first bills to take into account considerations on SGBV and gender inequality in field-based operations and peace negotiations.

The resolution also calls out for a starker engagement of the Secretary General as well as the setting up of a study on the impact of conflicts on women and girls.

### **Resolution 1820 (2008) on sexual violence during wars**

The Resolution 1820 recognizes the use of sexual violence as tactic of war to "instil fear and disperse civilian members of a community or an ethnic group" and defines it as a war crime and a crime against humanity. It also calls out the parties of armed conflicts to cease and take actions against the acts of sexual violence, by providing preventative action including pre-deployment , and requests the Secretary General to take into account the views of women and affected communities.

### **Resolution 1960 (2010) on Women and Peace and Security**

Adopted on December 10, 2010 to further the initiatives of the resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) among others, the resolution 1960 (2010) formalise the request of the Security Council to acquire from the Secretary General information, that would be made public, on parties suspected to

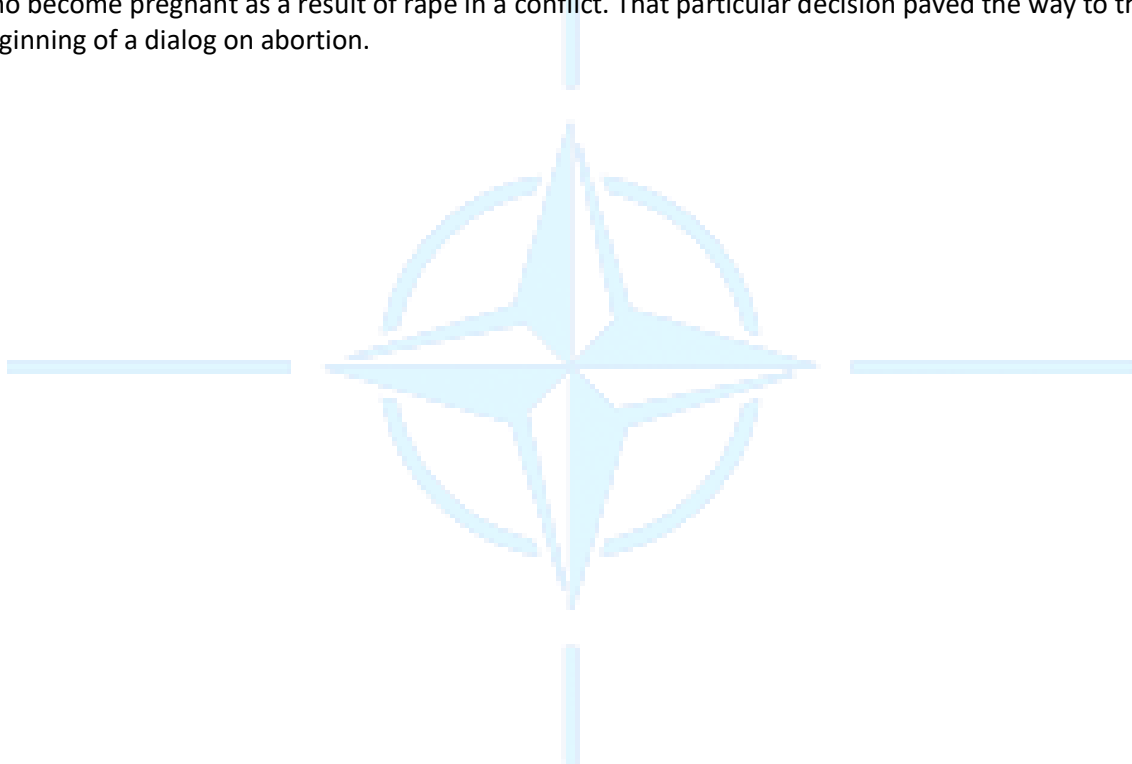
be responsible for acts of rape or other acts of sexual violence. Thus, the Council would use this information to take action against them.

The Security Council also demanded in this resolution a total transparency of the Secretary General on this issue as well as a policy of “zerotolerance” on sexual exploitations and abuse by United Nations member of staff.

### **Resolution 2122 (2013) on Sexual Violence in Conflicts**

The Resolution 2122 (2013), designed to strengthen the resolution 2106 (2013), is reckoned a watershed in terms of the evolution of women’s role in peace processes. The resolution puts in place a roadmap for “a more systematic approach to the implementation of commitments on women, peace and security” and underlines the critical importance of gender equality and woman’s empowerment to the resolution of conflicts.

The Security Council decided on that resolution to add a full range of health services for women who become pregnant as a result of rape in a conflict. That particular decision paved the way to the beginning of a dialog on abortion.



## Increasing Women's Participation in Peacebuilding

*"We know that for peace to be sustainable, it must be built on physical security, accountable governance, equitable economic development, reconciliation and universal access to justice. For peace to be inclusive it also must be built through the participation of both women and men."*

### Introduction

The prevention of both interstate and intrastate conflicts has been one of the key initiatives of the United Nations (UN) since its inception. Extensive UN involvement in peacekeeping and peacebuilding projects over the past generation has provided valuable insight and lessons into critical components of these projects that may have the best outcomes for preventing future conflicts. Peacekeeping refers to activities that help a country maintain peace and security in its transition from conflict to peace. Peacebuilding, on the other hand, is the process of supporting and building long-term peace in post-conflict societies through infrastructure reconstruction, reestablishment of security and justice sectors, security and legal reform, societal rehabilitation and reconciliation, and economic revitalization. Women are chronically underrepresented in peacebuilding, particularly in patriarchal post-conflict societies where women are largely excluded from leadership and governance positions. Yet, the full inclusion and participation of all members in a post-conflict society in peacebuilding increases the effectiveness and success of peacebuilding programs. Increasing women's participation is especially important in conflict mediation, post conflict reconstruction, economic recovery and re-establishing the rule of law, both because women are underrepresented in these areas, but also because these areas have enormous impacts on the long-term security and well-being of women in post-conflict societies. At the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, achieving gender equality was highlighted as its own Millennium Development Goals (MDG) – Goal 3 – in recognition of the negative impact that gender inequality continues to have on the overall success and well-being of societies around the world. While efforts to achieve gender equality have a long-standing tradition within the UN system, the importance of increasing women's participation within the realm of peace and security has only been identified within the last two decades. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is the UN body designed to bring together all relevant actors involved in peacebuilding activities and to consult and advise on current and future peacebuilding projects. Since its creation in 2005, the PBC has affirmed the importance of involving women in every aspect of peacebuilding. The founding document of the PBC, Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), emphasizes the importance of integrating a gender perspective in all of its programs and consulting with women's organizations to guide the PBC's engagement, and it is the only UN body with such an explicit mandate to do so. The country-specific work plans of the PBC and progress reports on its main agenda countries demonstrate the attention that is paid to the continued protection and engagement of women in post-conflict governance through this commission. While the PBC's programs in Burundi and Liberia have supported women's increased engagement in these particular peacebuilding projects, the PBC continues to collaborate with other UN bodies to continue the progress on women's engagement in peacebuilding globally. Further, through its collaboration with the UN system as a whole, the PBC helps steer the focus towards often overlooked issue areas, such as women's post conflict economic recovery. The Peacebuilding

Support Office (PBSO) supports the work of the PBC by assisting in the coordination between UN partners, setting agendas and themes for the PBC to address, and administering the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), which financially supports current PBC agenda states and other post-conflict states in peacebuilding projects. A key component of the PBF's established funding mechanism stipulates that at least 15% must fund projects that support women's needs or advance gender equality. The PBF also works collaboratively with the PBC and PBSO to assess how many financial resources for



Peacebuilding programs are being allocated for women's support projects within countries working with the PBSO and PBF, and to encourage gender mainstreaming in all project areas.

### **International and Regional Framework**

One of the most pivotal documents in framing the need for women's participation in peace and security work is Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on "Women and Peace and Security." The resolution encourages Member States and international organizations, including the UN, to increase the representation of women in institutions dealing with the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as to mainstream gender across conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes such as economic recovery and reestablishing the rule of law. This resolution has led to increased awareness of the importance of women's representation in peacekeeping missions, peace negotiations, and post-conflict governance. Resolution 1325 (2000) set the foundation for several additional resolutions under the same agenda item, focused on various aspects of women's role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013) call on all parties to protect civilians, especially women and girls, from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict situations, and further call for the inclusion of SGBV prevention measures in all peacebuilding efforts with the full participation of women as decision-makers and consultants in developing such policies. Resolution 1889 (2009) focuses more specifically on involving women in conflict negotiation and peacebuilding. Specifically, it calls for greater women's involvement in all stages of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, focusing on increasing women's opportunities to participate in post-conflict peacebuilding to achieve gender equality and full societal participation at all levels. This resolution additionally reinforces the adoption of the 7-Point Action Plan on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding, which was set forth in a report of the Secretary-General in 2009, serving as an important framework for UN and Member State engagement on women in peacebuilding. The action plan both tracks progress and sets new targets to increase women's participation in the following areas: conflict resolution; post-conflict planning; post-conflict financing; gender-responsive civilian capacity; women's representation in post-conflict governance; rule of law; and economic recovery. In October 2013, the UN Security Council adopted a seventh resolution on "Women, peace and security," which is focused on women's participation in rule of law and transitional justice as well as other peacebuilding processes. Resolution 2122 (2013) is thus an additional important point of reference for issues related to this issue.

Other international bodies and conventions have also affirmed the critical impact of women's Participation in peacebuilding. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) adopted at the 1995 fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing sets out a number of strategic objectives to increase the Participation and impact of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding within "Section E" of the Document. The BPfA's objectives include: the protection of women, assisting women's engagement, and promoting women's engagement in peacemaking and societal reconstruction. In 2005, there was a review of the conference: Women Building Peace Through Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Beijing + 10; the UN General Assembly (GA) also reviewed the conference in 2000 and 2005. The conferences heard from representatives of different UN organizations, regional groups, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that shared their respective challenges and successes in promoting women's involvement in peacebuilding processes. These conferences introduced a new avenue for discussion on women's involvement in security operations and created a forum to share information and identify new challenges and solutions in increasing women's role in peacebuilding.

## **Role of the United Nations System**

There are a number of UN organizations that work in conjunction with the PBC to further the participation of women in peacebuilding, particularly the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UN-Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), among others. Many peacebuilding missions and programs are preceded by peacekeeping missions and operations established in the midst of an existing conflict. Peacekeeping missions have gradually increased in scope and now typically include some degree of peacebuilding activities, including security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), and the promotion of human rights. These more comprehensive peacekeeping missions necessitate greater coordination between the DPKO and the PBC to ensure the continuity of long-term reconstruction objectives that may have been identified during the peacekeeping operations. The DPKO and the PBC have also conducted joint reviews on the transitions between peacekeeping missions and the PBC agenda countries to prepare more effectively for future transitions. To address this growing issue, the PBC works closely with UN-Women, particularly in the assessment stage of existing peacebuilding projects, and in releasing recommendations to strengthen the PBC's gender mainstreaming framework. UN-Women has worked with other UN bodies in assessing and reporting on the status of women, such as their legal rights and societal roles, in post-conflict societies and recommending plans to improve their situations alongside peacebuilding agendas, as it did in Yemen in 2012. UN-Women also assisted the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission in 2011 in establishing a gender unit to promote women's engagement in electoral and governance processes, which serves as a strong model for future governance reform projects overseen by the PBC. The reports and gender mainstreaming guidelines that UN-Women publishes are regularly reviewed by the PBC and incorporated into existing peacebuilding projects to increase their efficacy. UN-Women continues to work with the PBC on consultations and project planning, including the November 2011 High-Level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Executive Board of UN-Women on women's economic recovery.

The UNDP also engages in peacebuilding through its Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR). BCPR has identified women's involvement in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and recovery as key focus areas and has provided community support centers, legal aid, and access to land and credit to support women's recovery. BCPR also publishes reports on successes and remaining challenges in supporting women's recovery and engagement across agencies and programs, which the PBC uses to form decisions on future programs. Additionally, UNICEF collaborates on peacebuilding projects, focusing on the continued care and support of women and children in post conflict areas, particularly during the gap between emergency relief and long-term development. The work of UNICEF in post-conflict societies supports the work of the PBC by providing education to children, thereby supporting stability in post-conflict states. UNICEF has identified the need for greater coordination between UNICEF and the PBC to streamline objectives and collaborate on these initiatives in the field to improve outcomes of these programs.

## **Conflict Mediation, Peace Negotiation, and Post-Conflict Reconstruction**

Negotiating the terms of peace is a crucial first step in the long-term process of peacebuilding. In most conflicts, women and children make up a larger proportion of casualties than men; women are typically the main targets of SGBV, and women, who are typically the primary caregivers, are more acutely affected by infrastructure collapse. Despite the unique impacts of conflict on women, women continue to be chronically excluded from peace negotiations; of fourteen conflict mediations

Underway in 2011, only four included at least one female delegate participating in negotiations. Conflict impacts men, women, and children in different ways, but accounting for those differences without representatives from all affected groups skews negotiation points towards the dominant group of negotiators and marginalizes the needs of other groups, in particular, women and children. Those negotiations that do invite women to participate typically have a disproportionately low number of women to men. Unfortunately, the absence of women in negotiations translates to a direct exclusion of their needs and priorities; only 16% of peace treaties in the last decade contained any specific mention of women. This underrepresentation also ignores instances where women are combatants and activists, overlooking their impact on the situation and the unique reintegration needs of female combatants. Further, women do not solely advocate for their own post-conflict needs during negotiations; women have been shown to prioritize community concerns and universal humanitarian enterprises, including medical care and education, for the benefit of the whole society more so than male negotiators.

After terms of peace have been set, plans for reconstruction must be drafted and implemented. Rebuilding a post conflict society is a tremendous task, but it also presents a unique opportunity to reconstruct institutions and integrate norms in a more deliberate and equitable way. Entrenched ideas about women's societal roles as well as cultural and religious expectations can exclude women from traditionally male-dominated sectors including security, law and governance. Thus, involving women in peacebuilding and decision-making may set new precedents and create new norms and expectations surrounding women's societal roles.

While women must be engaged in everyday reconstruction projects, it is also crucial that women have equal opportunity to participate in leadership and governance roles both at the national and local level. Leadership workshops and collaboration with women's civil society organizations may simultaneously hone skills of potential female leadership candidates while raising the profile of future women leaders. Such workshops and civil society consultations have provided women in Sierra Leone with resources and information to further women's empowerment within the existing peacebuilding agenda. This led to further consultations with the PBC, PBSO, and PBF and supported the development of a national peacebuilding agenda for women. Similarly, appointing women to interim governance positions during the peace processes and in advance of elections may also raise the profile of female leaders and systemize female leadership within communities. The peacebuilding process in Burundi, as overseen by the PBC, included a quota for women representatives as a temporary measure to increase their representation within democratic government bodies. As a result, 30% of parliamentarians are women, a higher rate of representation than many other states worldwide, including those that have not experienced conflict in recent decades.

### **Women's Participation in Economic Recovery**

Post-conflict states with lower economic recovery and long-term growth tend to relapse into conflict much more frequently than those that can recoup economically. While lack of capital and catastrophic damage to infrastructure often necessitate external loans and adjustment programs, in the long-term, local economic growth can have significant impacts on the stability of post-conflict states. Women's participation in both formal and informal economic enterprise is regularly overlooked in post-conflict development plans; however, there is a direct link between women's empowerment and the overall economic growth and well-being of a state. Cultural factors can also often prevent women from fully engaging in formal economic enterprises, particularly in science and technology fields, which are often male-dominated. Eliminating barriers to women's involvement in these formal sectors is especially important because the private sector and dynamic market growth

Are critical for medium and long-term economic reconstruction. In the short-term, economic incentives to increase women's engagement may encourage communities to accept more women in the formal economy, thus paving the way for more permanent solutions? In the long-term, stable educational programs that train women and educate entire communities about individual rights and holistic approaches to economic growth can lift the stigma surrounding non-traditional work for women, including within the legal, medical, and security sectors.

### **Promoting Women's Rights and Reestablishing Rule of Law**

Finally, the protection and promotion of human rights must be an integral part of all peacebuilding activities in order to support the rehabilitation and reconstruction of society. In the report of the Secretary-General on "Women's participation in peacebuilding" (S/2010/466), particular attention is drawn to the need for more legal support services for women and girls to provide assistance in upholding their enshrined rights. Reestablishing the rule of law in post-conflict states involves constitution building, legal review and reform, land rights and economic reform, and transitional justice. While constitutional reform presents a tremendous opportunity to codify universal human rights and in particular rights to women, problems of enforcement have made these legal triumphs largely irrelevant in some post-conflict states that lack access to legal services necessary for women's protection. Economic rights will facilitate women's economic engagement, but there must also be mechanisms for women to resort to when these rights are violated or ignored. Corruption at the governance level and community justice may thwart efforts to uphold these protections for women. The PBC is working to develop stronger monitoring mechanisms to assess progress on protecting women's rights within different peacebuilding frameworks, as well as advocating for an increase women's representation in governance to advocate for women's rights.

The atrocities committed during conflict must also be addressed through transitional justice initiatives to facilitate societal reconciliation. Women are disproportionately affected by conflict, and many armed groups use sexual and gender-based violence as a tool of war to intimidate and dehumanize enemies and civilians. Sexual violence is also a regular occurrence in post-conflict societies, which limits women's mobility and access to essential resources for fear of continued attacks after hostilities have ceased. Thus, efficient and effective justice in dealing with these crimes may encourage silent victims to step forward with their experiences and prevent further sexual criminality in the face of swift justice. Increasing the number of women in law enforcement, justice, and security will also support the prosecution of crimes against women and keep considerations of gender embedded in their work. The PBC is advocating for the further development of capacity within the UN system to consolidate resources in support of legal aid and reparations for victims.

### **Conclusion**

Peacebuilding is a complex process. It simultaneously involves the restructuring of a society with input from actors both inside and outside of the country, collaboration and cooperation on a global scale, and long-term vision and perseverance. As roughly half of the world's population, women have a pivotal role to play in reconstructing and rehabilitation societies, as well as taking part in their own self-determination. The PBC has underlined the importance of increasing women's participation in peacebuilding from its inception, yet, despite its successes there are still many more challenges to women's equality in peacebuilding that require dialogue and collaborative engagement to resolve.

There are many international and legal frameworks designed to increase women's participation in peacebuilding and societal reconstruction. Community stakeholders, civil society, and international organizations that contribute to peacebuilding projects must re-examine these principles and make

Efforts to apply them more consistently to existing and future projects. Women's varying roles in conflict should continue to be identified and recognized by making women key components of conflict mediation and peacebuilding planning projects. Women's participation in initial agenda-setting will contribute to long-term successes of greater economic participation and respect for women's rights as equal partners in their states' future.

In their research, delegates should consider existing challenges to the involvement of women in negotiating peace. How important are cultural and/or religious factors, and how might these be adapted to involve women? How might the PBC, which works in consultation with other UN bodies, more directly address these challenges? How can the PBC ensure gender is mainstreamed across all its programs? Is it possible that focusing on the empowerment and equality of women in post-conflict societies may to the detriment of minority groups? If so, what mechanisms can be established to avoid the exclusion of minorities? In what ways can the PBC work in collaboration with national governments to further promote and implement women's participation in the growing number of peace processes, in their varying forms, across the world?

